

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-11

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PLAB,FR

SUBJECT: UDR SUPPORTS LABOR UNITY IN FRANCE

SUMMARY. UDR SEC GEN SANGUINETTI CALLED FOR LABOR
UNITY IN FRANCE IN EFFORT TO LEND CREDIBILITY
TO HIS THREAT TO DEAL WITH PCF IF ELEMENTS OF
PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY (LECANUET) SEEK OPENING TO
SOCIALISTS. GIVEN TRADITION OF FRENCH LABOR MOVEMENT
LABOR UNITY IDEA WILL NOT GET VERY FAR BUT WILL BE
EXPLOITED BY CGT-PCF FOR THEIR OWN POLITICAL
INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

1. ALEXANDER SANGUINETTI'S (UDR SECRETARY GENERAL)

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CAPACITY TO STIR THE POLITICAL SCENE REACHED A NEW

HIGH RECENTLY. IN RESPONSE TO LECANUET'S INTERVIEW IN "LE POINT" (26 AUGUST) ADVCCATING SOCIALIST PARTICIPATION IN PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY (PARIS A-476) SANGUINETTI SCOFFED AT THE IDEA AND SUGGESTED THAT IF THE CENTRISTS WERE TO WOO THE SOCIALISTS THERE WAS NOTHING TO PREVENT THE UDR FROM DOING LIKEWISE WITH THE COMMUNISTS. IT WAS NOT CLEAR AT THE TIME WHETHER SANGUINETTI'S POINT WAS TO RIDICULE LECANUET'S IDEA OR THAT HE WAS SERIOUS ABOUT IT. "LE POINT" ISSUE OF 2 SEPTEMBER SUGGESTS THAT THE SECOND MAY BE CLOSER TO THE TRUTH. SANGUINETTI IS QUOTED AS HAVING ADVOCATED NOTHING LESS THAN LABOR UNITY FOR FRANCE. HE ARGUED THAT "A SINGLE TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION WILL BE INFINITELY MORE EFFECTIVE FOR THE WORKERS AND LESS DANGEROUS FOR THE COUNTRY. TO CREATE NEW UNIONS WOULD MEAN TO FAVOR DEMAGOGIC DEMANDS AND TO PREVENT THE UNIONS FROM ANY ASSOCIATION WITH MANAGEMENT."

2. ANDRE BERGERON, FORCE OUVRIERE SECRETARY GENERAL, WASTED NO TIME IN RESPONDING TO SANGUINETTI'S PROPOSAL BY ISSUING THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT: "EVERY-ONE WISHES LABOR UNITY BUT UNITY IS CONCEIVABLE ONLY IF EVERYONE RESPECTS TRADE UNION INDEPENDENCE AND RECOGNIZES THAT IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND THE UNIONS HAVE DIFFERENT ROLES TO PLAY. THE FIRST ASPIRE NATURALLY TO MANAGE THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS IN THE GENERAL INTEREST WHILE THE LATTER DEFEND THE SPECIAL INTERESTS OF THE WORKERS REGARDLESS OF THE REGIME'S POLITICAL ORIENTATION. UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS LABOR UNITY WOULD PUT THE ENTIRE LABOR MOVEMENT UNDER THE COMMUNIST PARTY CONTROL. WE WANT NOTHING OF THE SORT AND OTHERS SHARE THIS VIEW WITH US." BERGERON'S STATEMENT WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE AGREES WITH SANGUINETTI THAT THERE ARE PRESENTLY ENOUGH TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS AND THAT IT WOULD BE DANGEROUS TO CREATE OR RECOGNIZE NEW ONES.

3. COMMENT: IT IS OBVIOUS THAT SANGUINETTI KNEW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT HE WAS EXPLODING A BOMBSHELL BY ADVOCATING LABOR UNITY FOR FRANCE AND MOST LIKELY HE DID SO FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

(A) TO LEND CREDIBILITY TO HIS THREAT THAT IF ANY ELEMENTS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY WANTED TO TREAT UDR AS A DEAD HORSE THE UDR WOULD NOT HESITATE TO DEAL WITH THE PCF;

(B) HE CLEVERLY CHOSE TO MAKE HIS POINT BY
LAUNCHING THE LABOR UNITY IDEA PARTLY BECAUSE IT
CORRESPONDS TO THE ASPIRATIONS OF A SIZABLE PERCENTAGE
OF THE WORKING CLASS AND PARTLY BECAUSE CATERING TO
THE CGT, THE PERSISTENT ADVOCATE OF SUCH UNITY, WAS
THE MOST EFFECTIVE MEANS FOR DELIVERING A
PUBLIC MESSAGE TO THE PCF.

(C) SANGUINETTI'S CATEGORICAL STAND AGAINST
CREATION OR RECOGNITION OF OTHER UNIONS WILL CARRY

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FAVOR NOT ONLY WITH CGT BUT ALL OTHER UNIONS WHICH HAVE COME TO FEAR THAT THE PRESENT REGIME WAS CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF RECOGNIZING THE RIGHT WING CFT (CONFEDERATION FRANCAISE DU TRAVAIL) AS A REPRESENTATIVE UNION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL.

(D) RATIONALIZING THE CALL FOR LABOR UNITY IN THE TERMS USED BY SANGUINETTI TENDS TO GIVE THE UDR A LEFT OF CENTER COLORATION SINCE IMPLICIT IN HIS STATEMENT WAS RECOGNITION OF TRADE UNIONS AS VALID INTERLOCUTORS IN FRENCH PUBLIC LIFE.

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(E) THE ONLY DISTURBING ASPECT OF SANGUINETTI'S INTERVIEW IS HIS APPARENT READINESS TO RISK FO'S CONDEMNATION AND ALIENATION. THE EXPLANATION FOR THIS MAY LIE IN SANGUINETTI'S JUDGMENT THAT FO'S MAJORITY MEMBERSHIP IS SOCIALIST ORIENTED ANYWAY AND THAT AT THE PRESENT STAGE OF POWER COMPETITION THE UDR HAD BETTER LOOK TO CGT LEADERSHIP FOR SUPPORT.

4. GIVEN THE TRADITION AND IDEOLOGICAL HANG-UPS OF THE FRENCH LABOR MOVEMENT IT IS EXTREMELY DOUBTFUL THAT SANGUINETTI'S CALL WILL GET VERY FAR. NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT CGT AND PCF WILL SEEK TO EXPLOIT IT EACH IN ITS OWN SPHERE OF INFLUENCE (LABOR AND POLITICS) TO STRESS RECTITUDE OF COMMUNIST POSITIONS ON MAJOR FRENCH ISSUES.

5. ALTHOUGH IT IS ALWAYS DANGEROUS TO DRAW ANALOGIES WE CANNOT RESIST THE SPECULATION UNTIL WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO SANGUINETTI ABOUT IT THAT HIS RATIONALE ABOUT LABOR UNITY WOULD RUN ALONG SIMILAR LINES ADVOCATED BY SOME ITALIAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERS AS ROME HAS REPORTED WITH MUCH INSIGHT.
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